

Now and Then Memories by orphan_account

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Summary:

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Now and Then Memories

To say that everything would be fine again would be a ridiculous statement, especially for the few remaining months of 1984. Reminiscent of the year before, the aftermath began with a clean-up; in an even more similar way to the prior events, it began with the Byers' house.

The kids, teens and adults, all sleep deprived and smelling like death, sat in the lounge of Chez Byers. The twirling vines of Will's possessed art still plastered the walls, though now it was less of an unsolved puzzle and more of a tragic memory of Bob the Brain. One might've called it a *then*-memory.

There were lots of *then*-memories, especially for the youngest Byers; what had before been the best week of a kid's life (Halloween) quickly turned upside-down on its head. Will couldn't shake the pure evil that had been pumped into his brain, he remembered every single thing. Though, that was his *then*-memory, his *now*-memory was plagued with guilt.

He could see the sorrow in his mother's eyes, just liked he'd seen when he had naïvely asked where Bob was; Joyce wasn't angry with him, he hadn't been himself, he had been *him*. After-all, it was perhaps the brutal death of her boyfriend that fuelled her with so much of an aggression to the Mind-Flayer (and the 'Demo-Dogs' as Dustin liked to call them).

Joyce wasn't going to be truly happy for a while, but she could remind herself that everything before was just a *then*-memory, her *now*-memory was having her son back, once again; this time however, things were seeming much more hopeful.

Mike was reflecting on how close he had been to Will in the past week, he cared so much about the boy; it scared him to see Will possessed. When he had been getting through the possession to the little of Will that was left inhabiting his body, he had felt sick with anxiety. The idea that Will might never come back, even though his body was there, it was too much for Mike to think about; but there he was, curled up next to Joyce on the sofa.

He hadn't heard exactly what happened with Will in Hopper's secret cabin, though from the way Will clutched his side and from the bruising on Joyce's neck, Mike could tell that it hadn't been easy for anyone. Even Nancy and Jonathan looked much more haggard than they had before. Though, like everything else, it was a *then*-memory, and what mattered now was the *now*-memories. Mike's *now*-memory was the weight that had been lifted off his chest and how great it felt; Will, Dustin, Lucas and himself (and maybe Max, though he'd never admit it) could finally be kids again. So what if they were the freaks of Hawkins, they were definitely the coolest.

Everyone had been silent for a long while, considering their *then*-memories and creating their *now*-memories. Hopper and Eleven had left hours before, they had barely arrived. They had announced that the gate was closed and Dr Owens was alive and in a hospital, then Hopper had let everyone say what had happened and did a quick check up on Will to make sure there was no more of *him* inside. After that, they were gone; Mike was sad at first, they all were, but Eleven was back, so how sad could they really be.

Soon people started getting hungry, and feeling more than ready for a shower; so, life resumed.

"Oh my god! Jonathan, Nancy come quick-" Joyce screamed from the kitchen, immediately knocking the confidence of everyone in the house.

"Mom? What is it?" Jonathan rushed in, expecting the worst.

"Who the hell put a dead Demo-Dog in my refrigerator?" Joyce fumed, both from the anger towards the beast and the food that had been thrown out to make space for the foul thing.

Dustin, who had been waiting for the bathroom to become unoccupied, suddenly cursed and came cautiously into the kitchen to admit his wrong doing.

“I-I’m sorry Mrs Byers, It was for science...” Dustin knew he was pushing it, and for a moment he thought Joyce had snapped, though once the woman began to laugh, he felt a lot less nervous and a lot more the same as Joyce; hilariously terrified.

The whole kitchen broke into hysterics, it was all they could do. There was no evil to be fought, codes to be cracked, puzzles to be solved, those were all *then*-memories. So in their clueless state, they laughed.

The laughter did eventually end and Joyce sent Jonathan and Nancy out to get pizza, Dustin removed the Demo-Dog from the refrigerator and threw it in a black bin bag; promising he’d take it to Hopper the next day.

The boys took turns to shower, Steve taking the longest, though that was due to the terrible state Billy had left him in. Will had shut himself in his room, all he wanted to do was sleep, he felt like an outsider; everyone else was smiling and laughing, all he could do was try not to feel alien in his own body. His head was pounding, like there was too much information waiting to be spilled out, whilst his mom, brother and friends may have resolved everything of their own problems, and even Will had resolved his physical problem of the mind-flayer within him, he felt scared and alone. He didn’t want to be a burden and stamp on the positive mood that filled the house, so he resolved to stay alone.

The drawing on his desk had been forgotten, until he caught a glimpse. The shadowy beast looking straight at him, giving him orders like he was simply a minion to evil. Will couldn’t bare it, his eyes welled up with tears and he hid himself under his duvet; if he couldn’t see it, it couldn’t see him.

Though it could. Will knew it could. A duvet couldn’t stop the eyes of a greater being from watching him.

A knock at his door startled Will out of his state of fear, he slowly peered his head from under the covers, feeling like a child, and looked to the door.

“Hey Will?” It was Mike calling out, sounding hopeful after so long of sounding the opposite. Will spitefully felt, Mike had Eleven now; then he scolded himself, he should at least try and be happy that others were happy, even if he couldn’t be.

“Y-yeah?” Will said, just loud enough to be heard. He wasn’t ready to face anyone, though he felt like he didn’t have much of a choice.

“Can I come in?” Mike asked, precautious in his tone; he could already tell that Will wasn’t dealing with things well.

“Okay.” Will decided to stay wrapped up in his duvet, if he had learnt anything from the past year it was to not lie about how he was feeling or what he was going through.

Mike carefully opened the door, as not to let it bang or creak, he thought that might scare Will. The walls were just as plastered in drawn-vines as the rest of the house, though in addition to the vines there were countless other drawings. D&D games, story ideas, superheroes, all drawn by the hands of Will Byers; the boy currently cuddled up on his bed, with tears in his eyes.

“Will, what’s wrong?” Mike rushed to his best friend’s side, feeling dread run through himself.

“Don’t worry, I just can’t stop thinking about *him*.” Saying the truth felt scary but Will definitely felt some of the weight lift off of his chest.

“Well that’s totally understandable, *he* has only just been removed from you so you’re bound to feel weird for a while.” Mike reasoned, his mind told him to take Will’s hand, so with a sudden burst of confidence, he did. He tried not to notice the blush that tinted Will’s cheeks for a few moments.

Mike thought after 353 days of waiting for Eleven he’d fall straight back into the boy he had been; bright, enthusiastic and blissfully unaware of the world around him. The truth was, Mike had grown up considerably and in doing so, had fallen out of love with El. Now he was much more interested in the dimmed down colours produced by cheap crayons and colouring pencils, the enthusiasm of stories told

and the reality of his love for his best friend.

“I’m sorry if I worry you.” Will said, voice sullen.

“Please don’t be sorry, if I didn’t worry about you that would mean I didn’t care about you!” *and oh god do I care about you*, Mike left out, Will needed support through his trauma, not something else to stress him out.

“Thanks, Mike.” Will smiled for what seemed like the first time that week, truthfully it probably was.

They sat in silence, thinking about *then* and *now*-memories. Will felt safe in the company of his best-friend, much safer than he would in the company of the Hawkins Lab scientists, or even his other friends; there was something about Mike, they were closer than anyone else.

Crazy Together

Will thought that was probably it, although Mike wasn’t crazy, he had his lover back, now Will was the only crazy person. He felt alone the more he thought about it, Dustin and Lucas had Max (although eventually one of them was going to be very disappointed), Mike had El; Will was the only one without somebody to love.

Though of course he *did* love someone, that someone who had stayed by his side through everything, who had gotten through his possession and made him feel like William Byers, who hadn’t thought he was any less for having “true-sight” or being controlled by the Mind-Flayer.

His love already had someone.

His love was also holding his hand.

Will realised he was staring at Mike and quickly turned away, blushing furiously.

“Oh, I totally forgot what I came here to tell you!” Mike mentally face palmed, “Jonathan and Nancy are getting pizza.”

“Awesome!” Will exclaimed, he felt a strange buzz of energy zapping

through his veins.

“One more thing, I’m really happy you’re back, I mean, you never left, but you weren’t y- you know what I mean...” Mike stumbled with his words, “I was so scared when you couldn’t remember stuff, I thought it was really you, I thought you wouldn’t remember anything... But here you are.”

Will smiled shyly to the ground, Mike considered everything and then decided what would be best.

“I know I said that was the last thing, but *this* is the actual last thing.” Mike took a few deep breaths before turning to face Will.

“Yeah?” Will asked, he was scared of what Mike might tell him, so his eyes began to tear up.

“I really like you Will, I think I might even love you.” Mike said quickly, he felt dizzy and couldn’t quite believe he had actually just said what he had said.

“Well I have one thing to tell you, Mike.” Will beamed, he couldn’t quite believe what he had just heard. “I think I might even love you too!”

A shout broke their loving gaze, at the door a very excited Dustin appeared “Pizza is here!”

Mike and Will chuckled, shaking their heads at the enthusiasm Dustin showed for food.

“Y’know, I think he’ll be fine if Max choses Lucas, he always seemed more romantically interested in food.” Will admitted, causing Mike to snort with laughter.

“You’re probably right, there.” Mike reasoned, standing up from Will’s bed, he was damn hungry and he imagined Will was too. “Come on then, let’s go see of Nancy and Jonathan know us well enough to get sausage and pepperoni.”